DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 404 254 SO 026 574

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TITLE	Schools in the Great Depression. Studies in the History of Education Volume 2. Garland Reference Library of Social Science Volume 1037.
REPORT NO	ISBN-0-8153-2039-6
PUB DATE	96
NOTE	203p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Garland Publishing, Inc., 717 Fifth Avenue, Suite 2500, New York 10022-8101.
PUB TYPE	Books (010) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Change; Educational Environment; *Educational History; Educational Practices; Educational Trends; Elementary Secondary Education; *Foundations of Education; Modern History; *Social Change; *Social Environment; *United States History; World War II
IDENTIFIERS	*Depression (Economic 1929)

ABSTRACT

This book examines the state of schools and the thinking of educators during the years from 1929 until the entry of the United States into World War II. These years were marked by social dislocation and suffering, yet research shows neither public school bureaucracies nor the leading educators of the day advocated any new advances in education comparable to the economic and social changes being proposed. This book attempts to delineate the effects of the Great Depression upon the schools and draws largely from the press and periodicals of the times. There are ten chapters. The first two chapters explore the recommendations of professional educators from the influential "Social Frontiers" and its leading writers, John Dewey, Harold Rugg, and George Counts. Subsequent chapters review the national scene, including the reorganization of New York City's public schools, and examine the case of the Seattle public schools and the conflict between bureaucracy advocating centralization and parents insisting on neighborhood schools. The book also addresses the issues of inadequate teacher compensation, the nonpayment of wages in municipalities, and the role of the federal government and the Works Progress Administration in improving the lot of the schools. The majority of teachers were female, and salary decisions reveal the casual attitude of the male-dominated school administrations toward financial self-sacrifice by their underlings. The work concludes with a status report on public schools at the end of the 1930s, including schooling for black children and a review of parental responses to curricular changes. (EH)

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